

defined what we had in common to make us one America? That's what I would like, and that's what you're making possible.

Thank you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:29 p.m. in the Terrace Room at the Fairmont Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Christine Pelosi, member, event steering committee.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in San Francisco September 20, 1997

Hillary and I are trying to get used to our first 48 hours of the empty nest syndrome. [Laughter] And so we found the youngest couple we could to host this dinner tonight—[laughter]—who have 17 years to worry about this happening.

I want to thank Halsey and Deborah for taking us in. And thank you, John and Ann and Brook and Sandy and Jeanne, all of you who sponsored this dinner tonight.

I will be very brief. I'm obviously in a rather reflective mood, as all of you who have ever sent a child off to college would be at this moment. I am profoundly grateful for the chance I've had to serve as President, grateful for the support I have received in two elections from the people of California, and particularly appreciative of the unprecedented help I have had not only in elections but as President from the communities represented in this room—sometimes directly working with us on hooking up more of our classrooms and libraries to the Internet, providing the software, the hardware, the training of teachers, sometimes indirectly, by continuing to advance the frontiers of knowledge and grow the economy.

I want to leave you basically with a simple thought as we break up and go to dinner. I came to this job 5 years ago with what I thought was a very clear, simple vision. I recognized a lot of the details I didn't know, although I thought I knew a lot about the basic economic issues and the basic educational issues and the basic social policies before the country. But I wanted to prepare America for a new century. I wanted to create opportunity, make sure that we could create, together, opportunity for everybody who would work for it. I wanted us to come together, instead of be driven apart, by our diversity. And I wanted us to continue to lead the world toward peace and freedom and prosperity.

The first thing we had to do was fix a lot of things that weren't working, that just didn't make any sense. One was our economic policy; so we adopted a new one designed to invest in our people, balance the budget, and expand trade in American products and services. It has worked. You have made it work. Millions of other Americans have made it work. But no one can seriously question that fiscal responsibility, investing in people and technology and our future, expanding American trade makes sense. And it's basically taken a burden off the backs of the American people in our productive capacity and also tried to play to our strengths.

The second thing we tried to do is to basically make America habitable again by having a serious anticrime policy that built on what was working on the streets. Now no one seriously questions that the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban and the 100,000 more police—that that was the right approach. And it's a good thing to have crime going down dramatically. People, just friends of mine who aren't even in politics, comment from time to time now as they travel from American city to American city how much safer it is in city X, Y, or Z than it used to be.

We have changed the way the Government works. We had the biggest reduction in welfare rolls in history. The Federal Government has 300,000 fewer people working for it than it did the day I became President. And we are trying, slowly but surely, to modernize it.

I saw someone out of your general line of work was in Washington the other day saying that most people out here operated at 3 times faster than normal business life; most people in Government operate 3 times slower. Therefore, you're nine to one ahead of us. [Laughter] I don't know who said that, but I think the math is right and the characterization is roughly accurate. But I'm trying to change that.

So tonight, as I think about the future of all those young people who started college yesterday, I think America is very well poised for the future. But I think things are changing so rapidly we have to recognize that a lot of our systems still don't work as well as they should, especially the education system. And more importantly, I think we should be focusing on what we need to make work for the future. How can we now provide the kind of institutional and environmental framework to guarantee that America will work well 20, 30, 40 years from now, to give America a chance to succeed, to give these dreams that our children have a chance to prevail?

The one huge issue we have to face is how to continue to grow the economy while improving dramatically our capacity to preserve the environment. I'm convinced the climate change challenge is real, and yet there are no simple, easy answers about how to transition our economy from where it is now to where it needs to go.

Another problem we haven't resolved is, how can people reconcile work and family? More and more people are working and raising children, and we need them to succeed at both. Desperately, we need people to succeed at both. And that means we have to have new arrangements. And then there's all the technology questions that you're more familiar with than I am.

We have succeeded, I think dramatically, in reducing the nuclear threat. And we're going to do more the next 3 years. But our children

will live in a world where terrorism, organized crime crossing national borders using high technology, drug trafficking, and people who have high-tech weapons but very primitive designs rooted in ethnic, religious, and racial hatreds, can cause a lot of trouble to a lot of people who 10 years ago would have never even bought into it. But now, because the world is so mobile and borders are so open and porous, we all become more vulnerable. So we have to figure out ways to protect privacy and yet give ourselves the common capacity to promote public safety.

So what I'd like to talk about tonight over dinner is, what about all those things in the future? I'm very glad the country is in better shape than it was 5 years ago, but we still have a lot to do to give our children the country that they deserve and to feel like all of us have done our job. And anything you can do to help, I'll be very grateful for.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:09 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Halsey Minor, chairman and chief executive officer, The Computer Network (CNET), and his wife, Deborah; John Doerr, partner, Kleiner, Perkins, Caufield & Byers, and his wife, Ann; Brook Byers, partner, Kleiner, Perkins, Caufield & Byers; and Sanford R. (Sandy) Robertson, chairman, Robertson, Stephens & Co., and his wife, Jeanne.

Remarks to the 52d Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City

September 22, 1997

Mr. President, Secretary-General, distinguished guests: Five years ago, when I first addressed this Assembly, the cold war had only just ended, and the transition to a new era was beginning. Now, together, we are making that historic transition.

Behind us we leave a century full of humanity's capacity for the worst and its genius for the best. Before us, at the dawn of a new millennium, we can envision a new era that escapes the 20th century's darkest moments, fulfills its

most brilliant possibilities, and crosses frontiers yet unimagined.

We are off to a promising start. For the first time in history, more than half the people represented in this Assembly freely choose their own governments. Free markets are growing, spreading individual opportunity and national well-being. Early in the 21st century, more than 20 of this Assembly's members, home to half the Earth's population, will lift themselves from the ranks of low-income nations.